THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Due to unremunerative nature of the project and acute constraint of resources, it has not been found possible to consider taking up of this project for the present.

Working conditions in Rail Workshops

1806. SHRI ANANTRAY DEVSHANKER DAVE: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the working conditions in some rail workshops are very pathetic and hazardous to the health of the workers;

(b) if so, what steps have been taken in this regard so far;

(c) how many workers of the workshops are suffering from common diseases ; and

(d) whether Railways have prepared any action plan to remove such diseases?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Approximately 2% of the workshop workers take treatment for common ailments in a month ,which is the same as for other Railway employees.

(d) Indian Railways have a system of monitoring industrial hygiene and occupational illness.

Construction of railway line between Nirmali and Bhaptiyahi

†1807. SHRI RAM DEO BHANDARY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) what is Government's plan for reconstruction of railway line between Nirmali and Bhaptiyahi of north-eastern railway which has been washed away due to Kosi river;

†Original Notice of the Question was received in Hindi.

(b) whether survey work of the said plan has been completed; and

(c) if so, the latest status in this regard and what is Government's future plan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) to (c) To consider connection of Nirmali to Bhaptiyahi by Railway line, final location and extensive investigation survey for construction of bridge on river Kosi, has been taken up. Further consideration of the project will be possible once the survey report becomes available.

Railways' ability to finance its investment needs

1808. MISS. SAROJ KHAPARDE: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Railways has been finding it difficult to finance its investment needs;

(b) if so, the details of factors which have eroded the ability of Railways to finance its investment needs; and

(c) the steps taken to solve the problem?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The financial position of Railways is extremely tight. This is so mainly on account of the following:—

(i) Steep increase in expenditure after the implementation of the Fifth Pay Commission, and lack of a matching increase in receipts.

(ii) The expenditure in the current year has further been affected by various post budgetary increases of more than Rs. 9000 cr. On account of levy and hike in prices of High Speed Diesel Oil, increase in rates of family planning allowance and incentive bonus to workshop staff, hike in rates of electricity tariff by some State Electricity Boards etc. Restoration of operations in Orissa after the cyclones has also put an additional burden. The pension liability is